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CALIFORNIA STEM CELL RESEARCH GRANTS DRAW 70 PROPOSALS

\$80 million available for 25 grants

SAN FRANCISCO, November 14, 2006 – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced today that it has received 70 applications for Comprehensive Research Grants, the second group of stem cell research grants it will award since passage of Proposition 71 in November 2004. The applications are from individual researchers at 23 non-profit institutions in California.

Comprehensive Research Grants will support mature, ongoing studies on human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) by scientists with a record of accomplishment in the field. This is also an opportunity for investigators with well-developed expertise in hESC research or in a closely-related field to pursue new directions in hESCs based on current research.

“We’ve devoted nearly two years to building the infrastructure necessary to support a robust scientific grant-making program,” said Dr. Arlene Y. Chiu, CIRM’s Director of Scientific Activities. “It’s deeply gratifying to turn our efforts toward the mission of this agency that Californians voted for – funding research that can turn stem cells into therapies and cures.”

CIRM’s governing board, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), authorized up to \$80 million to support as many as 25 Comprehensive Grants over four years. The applications will be reviewed by a committee of scientific experts from outside California and patient advocates from the ICOC. The committee will evaluate the scientific merit of each proposal and make funding recommendations to the full ICOC, which has final authority to award CIRM grants. Grant recipients are scheduled to be decided at the ICOC’s March 2007 meeting.

On October 16, 2006, CIRM announced that it had received 232 applications from researchers at 36 California non-profit institutions for Scientific Excellence through Exploration and Development (SEED) Grants. SEED Grants are intended to bring new ideas and new investigators into the field of human embryonic stem cell research, and offer an opportunity for investigators to carry out studies that may yield preliminary data or proof-of-principle results that could then be extended to full scale investigations. The SEED Grant applications will be reviewed by CIRM’s Grants Working Group later this month, with recommendations scheduled to be considered by the ICOC in February 2007. The ICOC may award up to \$24 million for 30 SEED Grants at that time.

About CIRM

Governed by the ICOC, CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.